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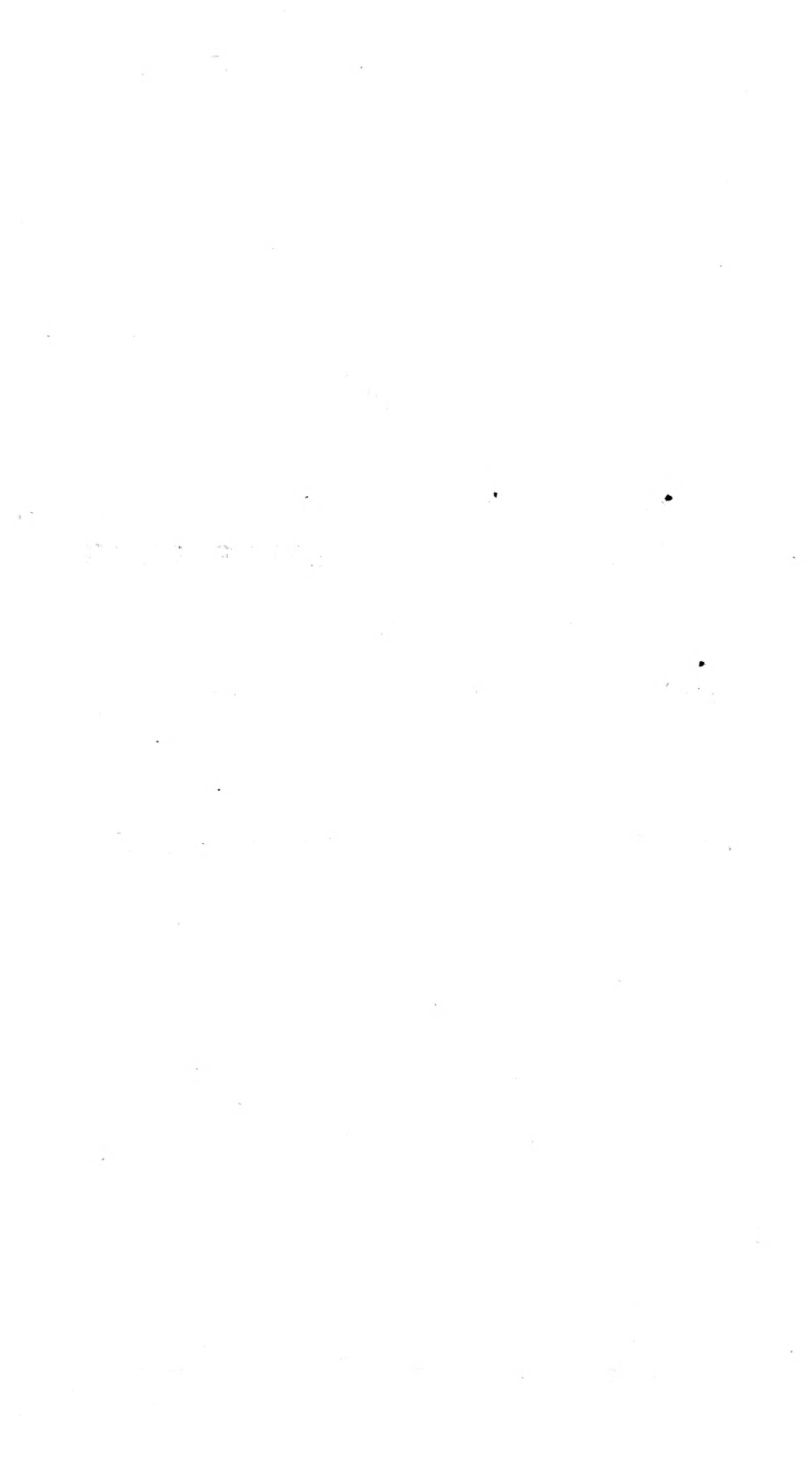




Mr. HOLMES'S
THANKSGIVING SERMON,

February 19, 1795.





A
S E R M O N,
ON THE
FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS
OF
AMERICA;

PREACHED AT CAMBRIDGE,

FEBRUARY 19, 1795,

THE DAY APPOINTED

BY THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

FOR A

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.

BY ABIEL HOLMES, A.M.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN CAMBRIDGE.



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1795.

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TO
THE FIRST SOCIETY,

AND

TO THE UNIVERSITY,

IN

CAMBRIDGE,

This DISCOURSE,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR UNITED REQUEST,

IS VERY RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.



A

S E R M O N

ON THE

FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS OF AMERICA.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII. 29.

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!



TO contemplate our blessings is, at once, a pleasing, and an improving, exercise. It is pleasing, as it argues a benevolent and noble disposition of soul on the part of him who bestows them, and as it gives us the assurance, that we are the objects of his regard. It is improving, as it cherishes in the bosom a grateful temper, as it inspires the wish to pay, if possible, some proportional tribute in return, and as it prompts us to an imitation of that very beneficence which we ourselves experience.—If such, then, be the pleasure, such the improvement, to be derived from the contemplation of benefits in general, even when conferred by man; how

how sublime must be the pleasure, how vast the improvement, arising from a religious contemplation of the benefits received from GOD! Human benefits are, at best, but scanty rivulets. Divine benefits are copious and majestic streams. The one are of an uneven and precarious current. The other overflow their banks, and yet are never diminished. The one depend on springs which are often dry. The other are supplied from a shoreless and unfathomable ocean.—Such sublime pleasure, then, let us indulge, such exalted improvement let us seek, on this august occasion, on this auspicious day, in the pious contemplation, and grateful acknowledgment, of “the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation.”

To the contemplation of these mercies, and of their divine Author, we are naturally led, by that passage of the sacred Word selected for the theme of this Discourse. It contains some of the very last words of *Moses, the man of God*; and is a part of that solemn benediction, which he addressed to the children of Israel, just *before his death*. Having, under the auspices of Heaven, conducted this favoured people from Egyptian servitude to the plains of Moab, so near to the borders of Canaan, as to be able, from a neighbouring mountain, to see the promised land; he calls together the twelve tribes, and takes his final leave of them, in a manner worthy of a great Prophet,

phet, and of the Father of the people. Calling each tribe by its name, and in its proper order, he pronounces a blessing peculiar to each. And now, collecting all these blessings into one central point—with a heart full of love to the dear people whom he is about to leave; of joy in the knowledge of their present, and in the prophetic assurance of their future, happiness; and of pious gratitude to that Being who had distinguished them with such unexampled favours—he exclaims: **HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL: WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE, O PEOPLE SAVED BY THE LORD, THE SHIELD OF THY HELP, AND WHO IS THE SWORD OF THY EXCELLENCY!**—The highest wish of the holy prophet is now fulfilled. He retires to the designated mount—and dies.

The passage chosen for our Text is, with a mere exchange of name, so strictly applicable to AMERICA, that, without a rigid adherence to its original application, I shall not hesitate to apply it to the favoured people of these United States.

HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL.—If Israel was, at this time, happy in the expectation of the fertile land of Palestine; and still happier, afterward, in the actual possession of it; this American Israel is favoured, in like manner, with an extensive territory, not yielding, in the fertility of its soil, and variety of its produce, to any country on earth. A moderate share of industry, in the cultivation of this land, will
always

always, with the common smiles of Heaven, procure to its inhabitants a rich supply of the necessaries and comforts of life. We may literally adopt the language of the Psalmist: *The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.*

But, instead of dwelling on the consideration of this very important blessing, let us proceed to consider those numerous and signal mercies by which our nation is distinguished, and which are enumerated in the Proclamation of our illustrious PRESIDENT, as what afford special cause, this day, for national Thanksgiving and Praise.

The first public blessing, to which our attention is called, is—"the possession of constitutions of government which unite, and, by their union, establish liberty with order."—What is man, without liberty? He is little better than a machine, controuled by the will, and subservient to the use, of another. The noblest energies of his soul are suppressed; and he is incapable of those designs, and of those actions, which stamp a dignity on the human name. Read this melancholy truth in the countenance and deportment of the poor African, born in slavery. Read it in the more enlightened and generous European, or American, when chained to the gallies for life.—Extend the question from an individual to a community; and—what is a nation, without liberty? A mere servile herd, void of improvement in morals,
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of refinement in civility, in arts and sciences, and resembling the beasts of the forest, rather than men. Read this humiliating truth in the degraded character of the present inhabitants of those celebrated countries where Athens, Sparta, and Corinth, once stood; where learning and liberty once reigned triumphant; where the free and allied States of Greece rose superiour to the arms, and to the gold, of tyrants; and where a splendid example was exhibited to the human race of the mighty influence of Freedom on national happiness and dignity.—But why do I tell a free people the value of liberty? Ye know its worth. *With a great sum obtained ye this freedom.* Nor was it a mercenary purchase. The blood spilled at Lexington was but an earnest of the costly payment. The entire purchase was ratified by the blood of thousands.—Nor was it ratified in vain. While the acquisition of liberty has raised us to national independence, and to national happiness, it has put us in possession of constitutions of government, which, with a divine blessing, will ensure permanency to our liberty.

The opportunity, providentially given us, of forming plans of government on the most rational, just, and equal principles, has been altogether unparalleled. “I confess,”—said a sensible and patriotic Divine,* in the year 1775, and one who, the year fol-

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* President WITHERSPOON. following,

lowing, signed his name in Congress to the DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE—"I confess I have always looked upon this with a kind of enthusiastic satisfaction. The case never happened before since the world began. All governments we have read of in former ages, were settled by caprice or accident, by the influence of prevailing parties or particular persons, or prescribed by a conqueror. Important improvements have indeed been forced upon some constitutions by the spirit of daring men, supported by successful insurrections. But to see a government, in large and populous countries, settled from its foundation by deliberate counsel, and directed immediately to the public good of the present and future generations, while the people are waiting for the decision, with full confidence in the wisdom and impartiality of those to whom they have committed the important trust, is certainly altogether new. We learn, indeed, from history, that small tribes, and feeble new settlements, did sometimes employ one man of eminent wisdom to prepare a system of laws for them. Even this was a wise measure, and attended with happy effects. But how vast the difference! when we have the experience of all ages, the history of human societies, and the well-known causes of prosperity and misery in other governments to assist us in the choice."—Of this propitious and unprecedented opportunity, the enlightened

ened statesmen of our country appear to have availed themselves to the utmost. And if the mere anticipation of an opportunity of forming rational and equitable plans of government awakened in the patriotic breast emotions bordering on enthusiasm; what bosom will not beat with emotions of transport, in the review of the happy effects of the grand experiment? For each of the individual States a CONSTITUTION has been framed, which secures to its citizens their most highly valued and unalienable rights. By these Constitutions, that inestimable right—on which all other rights so greatly depend—the right of free and frequent elections is ensured. Our *Governours proceed from ourselves*; and, in every State but four,* their election is annual. In every State, the Representatives of the people are annually chosen. With the security of this right, in connexion with the particular rights expressly noticed and secured by the several Constitutions, our liberties are evidently placed on the firmest basis.

In addition to that security which is given to our liberties by the Constitution of each State; these liberties derive their highest security and support, under GOD, from the CONSTITUTION of the UNITED STATES. By that union which is formed, by this Constitution,

between

* NEW-YORK, DELAWARE, SOUTH-CAROLINA and GEORGIA. The Governour in the two former States is elected for three years; the Governour of South-Carolina, for two: the Governour of Georgia, by the revised and altered Constitution of 1789, is also elected for two years.

between the several States, each State participates the power, and the privileges, of all the others; and an energy is thus given to the separate parts, as well as to the combined whole, of this vast republic. The Federal Government is as truly the government of our own formation, as that of this Commonwealth. It was devised and adopted by “The people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity.” These patriotic and glorious purposes have been, thus far, carried into effect, in a degree beyond what could have been expected, even with the aid of a sanguine imagination. The general prosperity of our country—which will presently come under consideration—is a full and happy proof, both of the excellence of the Constitution itself, and of the wisdom and integrity with which that government, which it ordains, is administered. It need only be added, that, by this Constitution, the President of the United States, and the Vice-President, are elected every four years—that the Senate is totally changed every six years, and one third of it every two years—and that the Representatives in Congress are elected for two years only;—that, both by this Constitution, and by the several State Constitutions, the Legislative, Judiciary, and Executive

executive branches of government are kept separate from each other—that all the landed and other property is in the hands of the citizens—that the press is free—that the privilege of trial by Jury is established—and that a regular method of amending the federal Constitution, and all the State Constitutions, is legally secured to the citizens.—What freer form of government can a nation expect, or desire?

With this freedom, order is established by our government. Our “constitutions unite, and, by their union, establish liberty with order.”—Perfect liberty is not destined for man, in this imperfect state. Ambition, pride, passion, and a thousand irregular desires of the soul, if permitted to have unlimited operation, would burst asunder the sacred ties by which society is held in union. Salutary restraint is essential to liberty; and they, who, either from ignorance, or from turbulence of disposition, aim to throw off all coercion, are, whatever may be their pretensions, real enemies to freedom. This restraint is probably as small, in our republican governments, as the nature of society will safely admit. It is a restraint prescribed by the laws, and not left to the arbitrary or capricious dictates of men. It requires the sacrifice of a small portion of liberty for the security of the remainder; and debars neither individuals, nor combinations of men, from any freedom, but that of doing injuries with impunity. Thus
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the restraint of our laws is productive of order ; and order is equally the ornament, and the safe-guard, of liberty.

“ The preservation of our peace, foreign and domestic ”—forms the next article in the Inventory of our national blessings.—But little more than a year has elapsed, since we were on the verge of hostilities with a foreign nation. The early Proclamation of neutrality by the PRESIDENT, expressive of a watchful solicitude for the welfare of the nation—the active and well directed exertions of intelligent and dispassionate members of Congress—together with the good sense of the collective body of the American people, have, under God, preserved our peace with the nations of Europe. The appointment of an Envoy Extraordinary to the King of England, to remonstrate on the subject of the spoliations on our commerce—in full confidence, “ that he would vindicate our rights with firmness, and cultivate peace with sincerity ”—was the finishing stroke of this equitable and pacific policy. It has repressed the inflammatory spirits in our country ; moderated, if not silenced, the clamour of meditated revenge ; and kept the nation in majestic suspense for the momentous decision.—In the mean time, our militia has become better organized ; our sea-ports have been put in a better posture of defence ; and, as an additional security to these and to our commerce, we are becoming

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ing furnished with a naval armament.—The expected decision, however, is obtained. A Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation has been concluded between the British King and the United States—“in which,” saith the King, in his late speech to the Parliament, “it has been my object to remove, as far as possible, all grounds of jealousy and misunderstanding, and to improve an intercourse beneficial to both countries.”—The principal avenue to danger, therefore, with respect to foreign hostilities, is now closed; and we may indulge the pleasing hope of maintaining peace with all the world.

Nor may we forget to record the preservation of our “domestic peace.”—However favoured in preserving peace abroad; without the additional blessing of peace at home, we must become a miserable and ruined people. Civil wars are, of all, the most furious and destructive, always terminating in the diminution of the treasure and strength of a nation, and, not unfrequently, in the entire loss of its liberty. But, through the blessing of Heaven, our domestic peace is happily preserved. This preservation is the more worthy of notice, after the recent and wanton assault which has threatened our internal tranquillity.

Accordingly, we are directed to express our gratitude to God, “for the seasonable controul which has been given to a spirit of disorder, in the suppression
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sion of the late insurrection.”—It is an humiliating consideration, that mankind know not how rightly to estimate their blessings. The same freedom which we enjoy is equably diffused throughout the American nation. General laws, indeed, extending to so numerous a people, differing in their habits and interests, will hardly fail to operate with some inequality. This difficulty was felt, and acknowledged, by the CONVENTION which framed the Federal Constitution. “It is at all times difficult”—said this Convention—“to draw with precision the line between those rights which must be surrendered, and those which may be reserved; and on the present occasion this difficulty was increased by a difference among the several States as to their situation, extent, habits, and particular interests.—In all our deliberations on this subject we kept steadily on our view, that which appears to us the greatest interest of every true American, the consolidation of our Union, in which is involved our prosperity, felicity, safety, perhaps our national existence.” Noble sentiments! worthy the patriotic Representatives of a free and patriotic People! May they be deeply engraven on every American bosom!—Had these sentiments been cultivated by the citizens in the western Counties of Pennsylvania, the laws would have been revered, the voice of the nation obeyed, and Faction would neither have inclined, nor dared, to lift up her head. The operation
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of a general law, designed and adapted to raise, in the easiest manner, the national revenue, furnished, or by designing men was made, the pretext for insurgency. The flame of dissention was kindled. Deaf to the remonstrances of reason, and even to that well-known voice* which proclaimed to the feditious the olive-branch, or the sword; these children of Anarchy rallied around the standard of Rebellion, and appealed to arms. But, blessed be God! the "spirit of disorder," which is the parent of *confusion and of every evil work*, was seasonably controuled. The vigilant GUARDIAN of our country, like a tutelar angel, hastened to ward off the impending danger. Fell Discord laid down her arms at the approach of a Patriot Army; and the miserable remnant of her progeny fled from that society which it had insulted and injured—to seek a hapless asylum in the forest, or the wilderness.—This event, apparently inauspicious, has more firmly established the constituted authorities, and confirmed the internal tranquillity of the nation.†

In addition to the recollection, and grateful acknowledgment, of these particular blessings, we are reminded to render thanks to God, "generally for the

* See the President's Proclamation to the Insurgents.

† It must give a sincere pleasure to every friend of humanity and of our country, to know that our domestic peace has received a recent confirmation by a Treaty of Peace, ratified in January by the President, between the United States and the Cherokees, and another Treaty between the United States and the Six Nations.

the prosperous course of our affairs, public and private.”—In a general view, the voice of health, of plenty, and of peace, is heard in our favoured land. Agriculture is daily receiving new and important improvements. Commerce flourishes. Arts and Manufactures are making a progress unknown before. Learning is perpetually increasing the number of her votaries and patrons. National credit is established. And “all classes of our citizens” are blessed with unexampled prosperity.

HAVING thus contemplated our national happiness in an *absolute* view ; let us, now, take a *comparative* view of the same subject. The Text and the Proclamation unite in inviting us to this view. It may be indulged without inflating national vanity, or tempting to the insolence of national triumph. It will have an influence directly the reverse of my design, unless it inspire emotions of gratitude for the blessings of our own nation, and a generous sympathy for those nations which are strangers to our happiness.

WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE?—When the prophet made this exclamation, no people on earth could be compared, for their happiness, with the people of Israel. But mark the awful effects of national corruption and apostacy ! Jerusalem, their once flourishing capital, is *trodden down of the Gentiles*. Not one stone of that temple, which was once the admiration
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of the world, is now left upon another. That nation, once the *peculiar people* of God, torn away from their own excellent country, are scattered over all the countries of the earth. Nor is any nation now to be found *like unto* this nation, for its misery.—Let this awfully memorable example ever be in our view, to impress our minds with that sacred truth: *The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him—but, if ye forsake Him, He also will forsake you.*

To resume the question, then, with the united exercises of gratitude and of humility in its application to AMERICA—*Who is like unto thee?*—AFRICA, which once contained several kingdoms and states eminent for the liberal arts, for wealth and power, and for the most extensive commerce, now lies buried in profound ignorance and barbarism.—ASIA, a division of the globe including a vast extent of territory, and capable of furnishing the best productions of earth, is principally inhabited by nations which have never seen the light of Science, of true Religion, or of Liberty. The prevailing form of their governments is absolute monarchy. If any of the Asiatic nations can be said to enjoy some share of freedom, they are the wandering tribes, as the Tartars and Arabs. But we can form no very elevated opinion of their dignity, or of their happiness, when we are told, that the one resemble our North American Indians; and that the other are a nation of thieves

thieves and pirates.—EUROPE, long celebrated for its superiour civilization and refinement, is, even now, principally possessed by nations which are strangers to that liberty with which the God of nature hath ordained man to be free. The European governments are, generally, arbitrary monarchies. Some are aristocracies, scarcely less arbitrary. Neither of these require any comment, where the question respects national happiness. Neither of them are free governments; and, therefore, the people who are subject to them cannot be happy.—If we look into those nations, whose more eligible forms of government seem to promise more freedom, and more happiness; we shall hardly fail of disappointment. That very enlightened statesman, and distinguished patriot, now in the Vice-Presidency of the United States—after taking a view of those countries in Europe, where the government may be called, in any reasonable construction of the word, republican—makes the following observation: “To our inexpressible mortification we must have remarked, that the people have preserved a share of power, or an existence in the government, in no country out of England, except upon the tops of a few inaccessible mountains, among rocks and precipices, in territories so narrow that you may span them with an hand’s breadth, where, living unenvied, in extreme poverty, chiefly upon pasturage, destitute of manufactures and commerce, they still exhibit the

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most charming picture of life, and the most dignified character of human nature.”* Such is the gloomy portrait of the most free and civilized nations of Europe! The exception of some of the Swiss Cantons, and of the Republic of St. Marino in Italy—for to these the exception here made must principally refer—is too inconsiderable to merit peculiar notice. And, although England is another exception; her freedom is not comparable with that of America. An hereditary king—an hereditary house of lords—a septennial parliament—a very unequal representation of the people—the legal incapacity of a large and respectable class of citizens† to hold any office of honour or profit in the kingdom, and even to share the privilege of an education for their children at either of the national Universities—are circumstances which stamp disgrace on the boasted Constitution of England, and which are absolutely incompatible with some of the most essential and unalienable rights of man.—Those European nations, which have recently acquired a thirst for liberty, have not yet gotten possession of the valuable boon. France, in struggling for her freedom, is obliged to maintain a contest, hitherto successful, with hosts of combined nations, once formidable, but unequal to a contest
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* Defence of the American Constitutions, Vol. I.

† The Protestant Dissenters.

with men determined to be free. While we anticipate the final triumph of liberty; it is obvious to remark, that such expensive hostilities abroad, and the destructions of Vandalism* at home, must, for the present, rob this mighty nation of liberty and peace.†——Ill-fated Poland! When thou wert at the goal, just ready to seize the prize of freedom, the rapacious Empress of the North, and a royal Plunderer,‡ snatch from thee, and divide, the palm. Were it the age of miracles, I would fervently pray that KOSCIUSKO§ might, even now, burst his chains, and, like another WASHINGTON, restore liberty to his country.—Geneva, a Republic which had just recovered its liberties, has recently lost them, through the base intrigues of a French democratical faction. The usurping power, by a refinement in wickedness, has added impiety to cruelty, and sacrilege to anarchical tyranny. Having banished, or destroyed, the best of the citizens, and plundered their estates,

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* This word, newly coined in France, plainly alludes to the Vandals, who, with other ferocious tribes of the North, near the end of the 5th century, made such memorable devastations in the Roman Empire, extinguished literature, and brought on the Dark Age.

† See Gregoire's Report on the destruction wrought by Vandalism.

‡ Catharine of Russia, and the King of Prussia.

§ A Polish General who served, in the contest for American liberty, under General Washington; and who has fought with distinguished courage and patriotism, for the liberty of his own country—but without success. In an action between his army and the Russians, he was wounded and taken prisoner.—Poland, according to the latest accounts, is now wholly subject to the despots named in the last note.

it has even interdicted divine worship; and the Genevese churches are no longer open but for baptism. This Republic, lately so respectable* and happy, is now “lost without resource, in respect to religion, to morals, to the sciences, to the fine arts, to trade, to liberty, and, above all, to internal peace.”†——
SOUTH AMERICA—to relinquish a view of the Old
World,

* Geneva has been famous for its early and steadfast adherence to the Protestant Interest; for the refuge it has given to thousands of people persecuted for their religion; for the valuable books it has printed; for its academy; and for the number of eminent theological and literary characters which it has produced. It was the birth-place, or at least the residence, of John Calvin, Theodore Beza, the Diodati, the Turretines, M. le Clerc, Rousseau, and many other scholars well known in the Republic of Letters.

† See “AUTHENTIC HISTORY of the Origin and Progress of the late Revolution in Geneva.”—In 1782, Count Vergennes, with a military force, overwhelmed the popular party at Geneva, and established a usurped government, in opposition to the well known will of the majority of the citizens. Upon the death of the Count, the fundamental Constitution was re-established on its republican basis; and every article of the litigation which had been maintained for a century past between the Assembly of the people, and the Administrative bodies, was definitively adjudged in favour of the former. This restoration of liberty commenced in 1789, and was completed in 1791. General Montesquiou was now commissioned by the French Republic to enter Geneva; and actually advanced in force to declare war against it. Every pretext for this hostile invasion was so ably removed by the Genevese, that this worthy general became their advocate, got his orders revoked, and obtained authority to negotiate pacifically with Geneva. A Treaty was accordingly reciprocally signed, and concluded. In compliance with one article of this Treaty, the Genevese were sending back the Swiss, whom, in the time of danger, they had called in to their aid; when they were surprized with the information, that the Convention refused to ratify the Treaty, but on condition of inserting new clauses. For the purpose of exacting this condition, M. GENET—whose name, or character, requires no explanation—was sent to Geneva. It was now discovered, that the Convention was determined to operate a political revolution here, after its own principles. The leaven, now introduced, penetrated the whole mass.—The subsequent history of this devoted Republic must fill every humane mind with sympathetic concern, and horror. It affords an instructive lesson to Americans.—We, through divine favour, are blessed with a genuine republican government. If, under whatever pretext, a foreigner, or even a citizen of our own, attempt to alter it, otherwise than in the *constitutional method*,—beware of him!

—Hic niger est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

HOR.

World, for that of the New—is principally subject to the crowns of Spain and of Portugal. The viceroys, who govern for their royal masters, are, like them, arbitrary and oppressive; and the poor subjects, whether natives, or Europeans, are in a miserable state of ignorance, superstition and servitude.—“When,” therefore—in the language of the Proclamation—“we review the calamities which afflict so many other nations, the present condition of the United States affords much matter of consolation and satisfaction.”—If, especially,—to use once more the language of the Vice-President—we “compare the constitutions” of other nations “with those of the United States of America, we shall have no reason to blush for our country; on the contrary, we shall feel the strongest motives to fall upon our knees, in gratitude to Heaven for having been graciously pleased to give us birth and education in that country, and for having destined us to live under her laws!”

WE are reminded, then, to enquire—To whom we are indebted for this distinction in national freedom and happiness. Our Text furnishes an answer to the enquiry: O PEOPLE SAVED BY THE LORD, THE SHIELD OF THY HELP, AND WHO IS THE SWORD OF THY EXCELLENCY!—These figurative expressions, *the shield of thy help*, and, *the sword of thy excellency*, denote, after the Hebrew manner, the interposition
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of the most High in the defence and salvation of his people. THE LORD was a SHIELD to Israel, in affording it defence amidst unnumbered dangers. He was a SWORD, in subduing its enemies, and in bringing it, against all opposition, into the land of promise. *Excellency** seems to imply *elevation* in happiness and dignity. GOD was the Author of this elevation. He made Israel *high above all nations in praise, and in name, and in honour.*

He is equally the Author of *our* elevation. We, too, are a *People saved by the LORD.* He is *the shield of our help; and the sword of our excellency.* In contending for our liberties, He *taught our hands to war, and our fingers to fight.—If it had not been THE LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul.—He who rideth upon the heaven in our help, and in his excellency on the sky, even the eternal GOD was our refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms.* He *turned the counsels of our enemies into foolishness, and made their judges fools.* He gave counsel to our counsellors, and *taught our Senators wisdom.* He inspired our civil rulers in the cabinet, and our military brethren in the field, with a spirit of patriotism and of union unknown before in the revolutions of the world. He raised up the

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illustrious

* In the original, מְעָלָה.

illustrious WASHINGTON, and furnished him with that astonishing assemblage of military and political talents, which qualified him, like another MOSES, to guide the armies of America to victory and triumph—to unite her citizens in one grand confederacy—and to preside in her national government with unparalleled dignity and glory.* While we acknowledge the instrumentality of second causes; their origin, and their successful efficacy, must be ascribed to JEHOVAH. It is equally true, with regard to the contentions of nations, and with regard to the contentions of the elements, that HE — “Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm.” He, with the same almighty energy, *stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. Promotion, whether of individuals, or of nations, cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But GOD is the Judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.—He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: He enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. At what instant He speaketh concerning a nation, or concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; that nation, or that kingdom, is brought to desolation. At what instant He speaketh concerning a nation, or concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it; that nation, or that*

kingdom,

* Her crown in peace, as once her shield in war.

kingdom, rises into celebrity and happiness. To HIM are we indebted for the recovery and establishment of our invaluable liberties, for the suppression of that conspiracy which recently threatened them, and for the manifold and signal mercies which we, this day, commemorate.* For those liberties, for these distinguished mercies, let us “render our sincere and hearty thanks to the great Ruler of nations.” With reiterated voice, let us unite in disclaiming the merit of our national happiness, and in ascribing all our felicity to God : *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.—Unto Thee, O GOD, do we give thanks, unto Thee do we give thanks.* Let all our faculties exert their vigour, in rendering this tribute of praise to Almighty God. *Bless the Lord, O our souls ; and all that is within us, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits.—He hath not dealt so with any nation.—Praise ye the Lord.*

WHILE we pay this tribute of national gratitude for our national blessings, let us—as it is recommended to us—“humbly and fervently beseech the kind Author of them graciously to prolong them to us.” And, in connexion with our prayers for the divine aid to enable us to make a proper use of our blessings, let us, as we would rationally expect *an answer of peace*, do what in us lies to promote the great designs

* DEUS nobis hæc otia fecit.

designs which are noticed in the Proclamation, as requiring our humble and fervent supplications to the most High. Let us pray to God "to imprint on our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to Him" for these blessings; and, at the same time, cherish a sense of these obligations in our own bosoms. Let us pray to Him "to teach us rightly to estimate the immense value" of our blessings, and, at the same time, endeavour to learn this right estimation.—Let us pray to Him "to preserve us from the arrogance of prosperity;" and, at the same time, studiously guard against national arrogance. Where are now the great empires of the world? How many have fallen a sacrifice to the pride of prosperity and power! The example of haughty and imperious BABYLON alone should sufficiently teach us to be humble forever, and to *rejoice with trembling*. Her language was—*I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow*. The voice of JEHOVAH was—*Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans! for thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms*.—Let us pray to God to preserve us "from hazarding the advantages we enjoy by delusive pursuits;" and, at the same time, guard against this egregious folly. If, as a nation, we are surrounded by "circumstances which peculiarly mark our situation with indications of the divine beneficence toward us;" why should we slight the boun-

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ties of Heaven, or destroy our own happiness? If our advantages are so real, and of such "immense value;" why should we hazard their loss by such pursuits as may terminate in delusion?—Actually possessed of the substance, why should we relinquish it for a shadow?—In this connexion permit me to recommend a proper confidence in our Rulers. Having, first, elected those who are worthy of the important trust, let us not withhold from them our confidence, through an unreasonable jealousy. Why should it be imagined, in a government like our's, that the moment when one of our fellow-citizens is chosen into office, he has an interest separate from our own, and that he will infallibly consult the injury of his constituents? Such an imagination is, in general, not merely ill-founded in itself; but it is productive of the most baneful effects in community. It tends to diminish the energy of the laws—to lessen the attachment of the citizens to the government which they themselves have formed—and to generate a party-spirit, destructive of national peace and happiness. Vigilance becomes men. It is the characteristic of freemen. Like the Vestal Virgins, guard, night and day, the sacred flame which ye have kindled on the altar of LIBERTY. But beware, lest, by too close a pressure, ye smother it forever.—Let us guard against intestine divisions;—and against the introduction of the indigested, heterogeneous, poli-

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tics of foreign nations. The destruction of the Grecian Republics teaches us the fatality of the one: the ruins of Geneva mark the danger of the other.—While we implore “the continuance of” the divine “favours;” let us seek to secure that continuance, “by not abusing them, by our gratitude for them, and by a correspondent conduct as citizens, as men,” and as Christians.—While we pray to God “to render this country more and more a safe and propitious asylum for the unfortunate of other countries;” let us open our arms for the reception and patronage of oppressed Innocence.—While we pray to Him “to extend among us true and useful knowledge;” let us cordially cherish every institution designed for this important purpose—especially this ancient and respectable UNIVERSITY.—While we pray to Him “to diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality and piety;” let us studiously cultivate these very habits. Let us make a sober and temperate use of all our blessings, and especially of our liberty.—Under our excellent constitutions, and administrations, of government, let us *lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*—Let us observe the pure and sublime precepts of CHRISTIANITY—a religion as conducive to national happiness, as it is to individual felicity in the present, and in a future, world.—To sum up all, let us *render unto Cesar the things which are Cesar’s, and unto GOD the things which are GOD’S.*

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The last clause in the Proclamation, the dictate of a soul glowing with universal philanthropy, has for its object the happiness of the human race. It directs us to pray to God "to impart all the blessings we possess, or ask for ourselves, to the whole family of mankind." This is peculiarly the subject of prayer. It is not our province to impart these blessings. On God we depend for the possession, and continuance, of our own. To HIM, therefore, who hath the distribution of all personal, and of all national, blessings, let us devoutly commend all the nations of the earth. May HE quell the commotions which agitate the world, and impart liberty and happiness to the whole family of mankind!

Bid the last breath of dire contention cease,
 And bind all nations in the leagues of peace,
 Bid one great empire, with extensive sway,
 Spread with the sun, and bound the walks of day,
 One centred system, one all-ruling soul,
 Live through the parts, and regulate the whole!*

O THOU great RULER of nations! who hast *set* thy KING upon thy *holy hill of Zion*. Fulfil thy divine promise. Give to JESUS, the PRINCE of PEACE, *the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession*. Let *the kingdoms of this world become HIS kingdom*, and let HIM *reign forever and ever*.

A M E N.

* BARLOW'S Vision of Columbus.









